
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6189

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senator Keiser)

READ FIRST TIME 01/30/06.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring hospitals to provide information to
2 help patients better understand their hospital bills; adding a new
3 section to chapter 70.41 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the
6 implementation of health information technologies in hospitals,
7 including electronic medical records, has the potential to
8 significantly reduce cost, improve patient outcomes, and simplify the
9 administration of health care. Further, the legislature finds that the
10 number of and complexity of the bills that result from a hospital stay
11 can be confusing to patients. Therefore, it is the intent of the
12 legislature to encourage hospitals to design the implementation of
13 health information technologies so as to allow the hospital to provide
14 the patient, prior to or upon discharge, clearly understandable
15 information about the services provided during the hospital stay, and
16 the bills the patient is likely to receive related to each of those
17 services. Recognizing that complete implementation of the technologies
18 required to achieve this goal will take a number of years, the

1 legislature intends to require that hospitals immediately begin working
2 toward the goal by compiling and communicating information to assist
3 patients in understanding their bills.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 70.41 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 (1) Prior to or upon discharge, a hospital must furnish each
7 patient receiving inpatient services a written statement providing a
8 list of physician groups and other professional partners that commonly
9 provide care for patients at the hospital and from whom the patient may
10 receive a bill, along with contact phone numbers for those groups. The
11 statement must prominently display a phone number that a patient can
12 call for assistance if the patient has any questions about any of the
13 bills they receive after discharge that relate to their hospital stay.

14 (2) This section does not apply to any hospital owned or operated
15 by a health maintenance organization under chapter 48.46 RCW when
16 providing prepaid health care services to enrollees of the health
17 maintenance organization or any of its wholly owned subsidiary
18 carriers.

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